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AUTHOR Linton, Thomas E.
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ABSTRACT

This paper, after discussing the inadequacies of present-day teacher education, proposes an alternative model which places first priority on the actual training of teachers, as well as administrators, for the public schools. The model emphasizes the realities of life in urban and nonurban America in the seventies, making the following assumptions: (1) Teacher training as such is the most important task that educators can effectively engage in; (2) Value questions are of major and primary importance in the total educational process; (3) The behavioral sciences, and physical and natural science, and educational "science" have provided sufficient basis for a grossly more effective and self motivating learning environment than is presently offered in schools of education or public schools; (4) The teacher's function is to educate or lead out and develop human potential; (5) All teachers going through the "system" or school of education should be cognizant of the excellent, the mediocre, and the savage societal conditions which are routinely present in the urban student's environment; (6) The teachers development should be a total process, consisting of cognitive, affective, and physical development, area of specialization, maximizing the learning environment, and social systems catalyst; and, (7) The total training process would involve extensive exposure to a wide range of community experiences, combining theoretical and applied work. (Author/JM)

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AN ALTERNATIVE TEACHER TRAINING MODEL FOR URBAN AMERICA --- THE TEACHER AS A SOCIAL SYSTEMS CHANGE AGENT.

Thomas E. Linton, Ph.D.
Professor of Education
University of Illinois at Chicago Circle
College of Education
Box 4348
Chicago, Illinois 60680

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AN ALTERNATIVE TEACHER TRAINING MODEL FOR URBAN AMERICA -- THE TEACHER AS A SOCIAL SYSTEMS CHANGE AGENT.

Prior to presenting my suggestions for an alternative teacher training model for urban America, I feel it is essential to provide a brief prologue concerning the present state of the teacher training process.

I. Present state of teacher training in Schools of Education:

1. The current teacher training model essentially supports and buttresses the rampant and extensive social pathology which characterizes the routine daily life for some 30 to 50 million Americans. This is achieved through the curriculum content, the deliberage disengagement with urban reality, and primarily through the near total removal of the training programs from the brutal and corrupting moral conditions which are for the most part accepted as <u>givens</u> by urban university faculties, whether in faculties of Education, or the behavioral sciences, or throughout the elitist oriented academic community of scholars.

2. The current model serves to perpetuate faculty and student alienation, apathy and social passivity towards those major social and economic questions which increasingly surround and destroy the socialization and educational objectives of the public school. Articles such as Ravitch's criticisms of the state of community control in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Demonstration District in New York City, and the Baratz's article titled "Early Childhood Intervention: The Social Science Base of Racism" in the <u>Harvard Educational Review</u> completely ignore the long history and objective data on the effects of poverty, racism, protein deficiency, starvation, violence, crime, and the near total disintegration of stable family life in any terms in these

disadvantaged ghetto areas. Most of the federal funds that are given to welfare and education programs are used to help individuals psychologically or remedially to adjust to and accept monstrous social and economic conditions.

Leon Keyserling has stated:

> Placing appropriate emphasis on the characteristics of the poor is helpful, but exaggerating these characteristics as the major cause of their poverty tends to blame individuals rather than the malfunctioning of the economy in which they live.

The ghetto historically was a functional and extremely profitable component action within our traditional and sanctioned social system. This ~~single~~ simple reality seems to be generally ignored and rarely discussed by the representatives of the poverty, education, and mental health establishment.

In addition, the black and Chicano ghettos have been exploited by an interrelated group of absentee landlords, retail stores, wage garnisheement, the criminal syndicate, and civic officials at all levels of state and city government. The conventional wisdom of our time, the tribal superstition, and racial ritual is that a remedial educational approach to ghetto schools seems a rational response. While there is abundant evidence that if we create the social requisites for mental health, employment, social stability, human status, and community integration, we will directly effect, on a mass basis, the educational achievement and mental health of 20 to 30 million Americans

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who are currently destined from birth to be intellectually and emotionally crippled.

The present extensive social pathology of our social and economic system is an efficient device, for it permits the state with all its built in forms of civic, business, and professional corruption to scapegoat particular minority groups, and to rationalize the actual causes of their alienation, violence, academic failure, and major removal from the reward system utilized by the majority members of the non-ghettoized population.

Leslie Fiedler has written:

> Ghettoization has two purposes: to force on those who are ghettoized conditions of squalor which weem to justify the grounds of discrimination against them and to make them if not unreal, at least, invisible. We effect surprise at how invisible the German concentration camps were to many Germans, but precisely as "invisible" are the negro ghettos of New York and Chicago to those who never walk that way.

The earlier and more directly punitive methods of controlling the impoverished and the ghettoized have been replaced by professional dogmas and so called research and scholarly postures which support a more subtle and subversive means of abetting the continued servitude and educational and social failure of these groups. In the (Harvard Education Review, May, 1970).

In this issue Paulo Freire has written:

"But being (p. 210) outside of, or marginal to" necessarily implies a movement of the one said to be marginal from the center

where he was, to the periphery. -- Admitting the existence of men "outside of" or "marginal to" structural reality, it seems legitimate to ask: Who is the author of this movement from the center of the structure to its margin? Do so called marginal men.... make the decision to move out to the periphery of society? If so, marginality is an option with all that it involves; hunger, sickness, ricketts, pain, mental deficiencies, living death, crime, promiscuity, despair, and the impossibility of being. In fact however it is difficult to accept that 40% of Brazil's population, almost 90% of Haiti's, 60% of Bolivia's, about 40% of Peru's, more than 30% of Mexico's and Venezuela, and about 70% of Guatemala's (and about 25% of the U.S.)* could have made the tragic choice of their own marginality -- If then, the marginality is not by choice, marginal man has been expelled from and kept outside of the social system and is therefore the object of violence."

"Therefore, the solution to their problem is not to become "beings inside of" (the system) but men freeing themselves, for in reality, they are not marginal to the structure, but oppressed men within it. Alienated men, they cannot overcome their dependence by "incorporation" into the very structure responsible for their dependency. There is no other road to humanization -- theirs as well as everyone else's -- but authentic transformation of the dehumanizing structure.

* Author's Insert.

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"What is important, nevertheless, is that once cracks in the structure begin to appear, and once societies enter the period of transition, immediately the first movements of emergence of the hitherto submerged and silent masses begin to manifest themselves. This does not mean, however, that movements towards emergence automatically break open the culture of silence. In their relationship to the metropolis, transitional societies continue to be silent totalities. Within them, however, the phenomenon of the emerging masses ~~focus~~ forces the power elites to experiment with new forms of maintaining the masses in silence, since the structural changes which provoke the emergence of the masses also qu alter their quasi emmersed and semi-intrasitive consciousness," (462, Cultural Action and Conscientization, Harvard Education Forum V. 40,3, August, 1970.)

In simplest terms, the federal government was probably sincerely concerned with lessening the broad scale social pathology, but the professionals in Education, health, welfare and the behavioral sciences have chosen to enlarge their individual and establishment positions while carefully avoiding those basic social and economic issues involved. The acedemic professionals have chosen instead to deal mainly with procedural and methodoligical research questions rather than substantive social policy questions.

> Paul Goodman has stated: This theoretical methodology is irrelevent to our ongoing society whose needs rather are glaring and hardly require so much subtle documentation and analyses before going to work. (p. 87 Community of Scholars)

The refusal to examine the more germane social issues may be a function of the professionals desire to maintain their elitist economic and political power position, regardless of the implications for the general society. Hans Morganthan writing on the intellectuals current relationship with the government has stated:

> He does not need to be silenced, he silences himself. Silence in regard to these issues is a passive manifestation of conformity--the academic by accepting one or the other of these rewards enters into a subtle and insidious relationship with the government which imperceptably transforms the position of independent judge to that of client and partisan. In consequence, his intellectual function is also transformed and in the measure that he values the social rewards and professional advantages more highly than his committment to the truth, he becomes a political ideologogue, justifying morally and rationalizing intellectually the policies of the government.

The process that is obviously present in the behavioral sciences, and its applied application through the educational training and research institutions is one of sophisticated reinforcement of those assumptions and ethics which support the society rationale. What we tend now to have is the professional elites through their educational technology and Alice in Wonderland research strategies supporting the

continuance of two separate social systems within the present nonsensical rhetoric of democratic pluralism. In other terms we have been very clever selecting and training those researchers and field projects which sustain

> an efficient elite, maintaining authority and asserting its will over the mass by the rationally calculated use of institutional methods of persuasion.

~~2~~ The current model serves to ~~perpetuate alienation, apathy and social passivity towards the major social problems which increas~~ingly ~~serve to lessen and destroy the basic educational purpose of the school~~. Essentially the behavioral science and educational researchers have accepted what has been termed the elitist theory of democratic society. As Walker has stated:

> At the heart of the elitist theory is a clear presumption of the average citizens inadequascies. As a consequence, democratic systems must rely on the wisdom, loyalty and skill of their political leaders, not on the population at large. The political system is divided into two groups, the elite, or the political entrepreneurs who posses ideological committments and manipulative skills, and the citizens at large. (65)

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Learning (and research) have been recruited in the service of the established power system in the urban areas. Social scientists now march jauntily behind the banner of the benevolent warfare - welfare corporatist state. They provide rhetoric, techniques, and manpower for enriching and legitimizing the (normative values, and daily life conditions*) of the Prest Society. (p. 196 "Research in such tension areas as race, poverty, violence, delinquency and population movements also tended to emphasize the approaches of accomodation and adjustment within the factory, the ghetto, the deprived school and the welfare state. Underlying the chasm of scientific objectivity so cherished by the newer breed is the proud assumption of moral detachment. The attempted emulation of the physical and natural sciences confuses thoroughly the essence of science. As Robert Lynd has stated in Knowledge for What (p. 195) "Research without an actively selective point of view becomes the dirty bag of an idiot filled with bits of pebbles, straws, feathers and other random hording. . ."

3. The current teacher training model, and its allied removed educational researchers acdept not only the social problems as givens within an apparently bankrupt urban educational system, but they also continue to be defensive about the scapegoat usage of the school system by the media, the

government and related criterias. They accept the nonsensical tribal wisdom which dictates that the school is responsible for resolving the disastrous urban problems which make reasonable learning objectives a fantasy. Such issues as desegregated schooling, busing, integrated faculties, compensatory education, head start and follow through, are very unclever elitist strategies to continuously avoid a direct and honest confrontation with the actual maintaining causes of poverty, racism, segregation, crime, violence, etc.

4. The current teacher training model is extraordinarily removed from the social and economic realities of 1971. The present model is vintage 1930 while the social system surrounding the teacher training programs, in the urban environment, is on the verge of collapse in several obvious and major directions.

5. The current teacher training model has carefully utilized the concepts of education technology, and research to mask a lesser refusal to carefully examine the corruption and social decay which are integral to the traditional functioning of the educational establishment. This is reflected in:
   The reinforcement system utilized in Schools of Education.
   The task assignments and expectations placed on Professors of Education.
   The Federal and State funding systems.

The refusal of urban school systems to radically alter their long term ossification formulas for inevitable decay, and the compliance of Schools of Education in the preparation of teachers for submissive functioning in these schools.

6. Schools of Education reflect these concerns, and priorities by their basic disinterest in that process which is the essence and reason d'etre for their professional existence. It would be as though medical doctors turned their backs to the practice of medicine, and the training of doctors; and chose to emphasize medical research in highly esoteric areas; as well as emphasizing the primary value of elaborate post M.D. medical training.
7. This process invokes a ritualistic removal from reality, a professional schozophrenia, which must be partakin in; to be believed. With all of the public and external criticisms of teacher training and public education, little in the way of radical educational change has been undertaken by schools of education, even though many social forces would support total re-designs of teacher education models and public school learning environments.
8. Part of this ritualistic process is seen in the recent rise of extensive educational research programs, and elaborate doctoral, and post doctoral training schemes which are completely removed from the hideous problems of school and learning in vast segments of urban America. The rise in educational technology, and the levy priority attached to grant achievement and research publication, inevitably results in a negative value placed on the undergraduate teacher training process.
9. While some professional groups such as American Association of Ortho-psychistry, have given major emphasis to the presentation of lesser social questions, as these relate to psychopsthology, many of the educational meetings, such as AERA, serve as mutual reinforcement sessions for those involved in highly esoteric research questions wholly unrelated to the daily savage conditions which are a routine component in the non-school lives of millions of urban children.
10. Schools of Education, have been viewed by students and lay critics as splendors of social isolation, conservative retrenchment, and promoters of compliance with the established social system. While these schools have been major recipients (in the academic world) of government funds they have rarely chosen to develope teacher training models which could make a difference in the urban school settling. They have chosen rather to build empires in isolation and teacher training models completely divorced from the reality of urban educational conditions.

They have espoused and hustled operant conditioning, programmed learning, computer assisted instruction, and evaluation models, as though these were serious responses to the dressy, boring educational environment found in most urban schools. They have routinely accepted the brutish le lessening environments of inner city schools, while discussing research strategies, taken economics, micro teaching, and the utilization of Piagetian models in suburban women's liberation day care centers.

11. In this regard they are similar to their collegues in the behavioral sciences, where a long term and careful avoidance of reality has been not so cleverly developed for many years. In Berger's terms the social scientific objectivity as lesser to their research activity and refused to confront, discuss, and awaken their students and collegues to their roles in the painful and obvious death of the social system.

And it must be stressed that there is no exaggeration in the statement that the system is beyond token repair.

12. At this point in time it is difficult to believe that the Educators, or the behavioral scientists are unaware of the rampant social pathology to which their endeavors directly lend support. Within Schools of Education this is grossly apparent in the

(1) Nature of student selection.

(2) The compliancy and subordination aspects of the teacher training models.

(3) The extreme feminization of United States education at all levels, including male and female varieties of feminine convergence/traits etc.

(4) The unquestioning acceptance of"conventional wisdom" about our social system and the expectations that this wisdom shall be shared by the professors and students, even though many of these sense that this "wisdom" is both meaningless, and invalid.

(5) The factory (non-human) approach to teacher training and the refusal to place major priority on this process, as opposed to "research", or graduate training. (Exceptions like Bank Street College and a few others notwithstanding, rather they strengthen the case).

F. Lawton

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13. What is proposed is an alternative model, one which places first priority of the actual training of teachers, as well as administrators for the public schools.

The proposed alternative models would emphasize the realities of life in urban and non urban America in the 70's. It would make the following assumptions.

(1) That teacher training, as such, is the most important task that educators can effectively (in terms of training) engage in.

(2) That value questions are of major and primary importance in the total educational process; and that "technology" as such does not provide moral and ethical direction for a society, technology provides the plumbing, not the content of the educational act. Oversimplistic reductions of learning theory do not provide human and social alternatives.

(3) That the behavioral sciences, and physical and natural science and Educational "science" have provided (for the moment) sufficient basis for a grossly more effective and self motivating learning environment than is presently offered in Schools of Education or public schools.

(4) That the teacher's function is to educate or lead out and develope the human potential rather than to stifle, subvert and cripple that human potential. A school of Education does not have to be a factory for raw naive undergraduates, it should be an educating place, a powerful and an exciting center for maximal human growth, properly and "scientifically" conceived. Schools of Education could readily become the most exciting centers of action on University Campuses.

(5) That all teachers going through the "system" or school of education should become cognigant of the excellent, the mediocre and the savage societal conditions which are routinely present in the urban student's environment. None of these conditions should be presented as givens rather they should be perceived critically, objectily and humanly.

(6) The teachers development should be a total process in the sense of the French "Educateur", the training process should consider, (A) cognitive development, (B) affective development, (C) physical development, (D) area of specialization (E) maximizing the learning environment and (F) social systems catalyst.

(7) The total training process would involve extensive exposure (in depth) to a wide range of community experiences over a four year, eleven month academic year. The program would combine (similar to Antioch) theoretical and applied work, placing major value on the successful completion of the three major components namely (A) Liberal Arts and Specialization area (B) Educational Program and (C) Extensive Internship periods in issued community program settings.

(8) That the teacher be chosen, and trained to be both a facilitator within the learning environment, as well as a social systems change agent; working towards the re-establishment of a more humane, and civilized approach to social existence for everyone in American Society.

If schools of education were now engaged in a meaningful major effort to be relevant to the task of making primary and secondary schools intentional communities -- these schools would themselves be scenes of exciting experimentation to increase individuality and heterogenity among staff and students alike, to reduce conformity and subordination (within the accepted normative model) to embody organizational processes of development in place of mechanical programs of industrial bureaucracy.

In closing the words of James Agee seem appopriate to the essence of

what is termed present day behavioral science and educational research.

> It seems to me curious, not to say obscure and thoroughly terrifying, that it could occur to an association of human beings drawn together through need, and chance, and for profit -- to pry intimately into the lives of an undefended and appallingly damaged group of human beings for the purpose of parading their nakedness, disadvantage and humiliation of these lives before another group of human beings in the name of science; But you are too much for them; the weak in courage are strong in cunning, and one by one you have captured and dishonored (them)."

I would like to see us make a major break from our traditional and counter productive educational priorities, both in research and in teacher training. In doing this, not only would our own daily work become more like a human community, but there is the possibility that our actions will make a difference in the larger and extraordinarily fragmented urban community.